

Real Church – Serving God and Serving People

There are 4 kinds of people.

The first are people who can sing and do sing.

We love these kinds of people. They have great voices and they know it. They sing in public, they sing on stages, they might even get paid to sing.

The second are people who can sing, but don't sing.

This one is a bit of a shame. There are people with actual singing ability and talent but for whatever reason, they don't do it.

The third are people who can't sing and don't sing.

We also love these kinds of people. They are not good at singing and they know they aren't good at singing. A caveat here – I'm not talking about during worship. Scripture says that we can make a joyful noise to worship, so during worship, go for it, "sing/screech" as loud as you want because it's really just about giving God what you have and giving God praise, so during worship, you can go as crazy as you want, nobody's going to be offended.

The fourth are people who can't sing and do sing. These are the kinds of people who overestimate their singing ability. Or maybe they lack a bit of self-awareness. Caveat still applies, we encourage you to sing loudly and exuberantly in worship.

The saddest category are those who can sing but don't sing. Because these people have a real genuine talent and ability that is untapped, under-utilised, and they have a gift that is lying dormant.

Because this doesn't just apply to singing, this applies to all areas of giftings and talents. I wonder how many gifts and talents and skills are under-utilised by all of us. I mean, singing is one thing, but what about every other talent and gift out there? What about designing or art or engineering or team building or management or leadership or public speaking or mentoring or teaching or an infinite list and combination of talents and gifts?

Rom 12:6 ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

Each of us – that means that God has given every single person has a gift or a talent or a skill to offer. Serving God is meant to start with the gift and talent that you've been given. Serving God is not about being busy or combatting boredom. It's not like God wants you to serve Him because otherwise you have nothing else to do on a Sunday or during the week. It's not about busywork.

Serving God isn't about time to fill, it's about problems to solve.

We ask people to volunteer because everyone has a something to offer and a part to play to grow God's kingdom.

How do you know what your talent is?

What are you good at?

It's something that people have said you're good at, they've appreciated your skill, they've mentioned it to you and to others that you have a talent.

In 1 Sam 16:18 "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre."

David was good at playing the lyre, he was a great musician, a singer, and a songwriter. What are you good at?

For you, that could be the ability to sing, to play an instrument, to design, videography, photography, public speaking, teaching, a whole range of things that you're just good at. Use what you're good at to serve God.

What do you have?

This might just be a resource that you're able to offer. But you're able to serve God with your possessions, your wealth, your time, your strength – if you're rich in a resource, it can be used to serve the kingdom of God.

1 Chron 29:2 ²With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise,^[a] stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. ³Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: ⁴three thousand talents^[b] of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents^[c] of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, ⁵for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen.

David, at the end of his life, when he realised that he wouldn't be the one to build the temple, which was on his heart to do, he gave of his resources. He served God by providing the resource for someone else to use. What resource do you have? Maybe it's your finances, or your time, your energy, your strength, something that you can offer to make it happen.

What have you learnt?

What experiences have you gone through that you're able to offer to serve God and to build His kingdom?

In 1 Sam 17, David describes his experiences – he had killed a lion and a bear while defending the sheep, which was just a setup for him to kill Goliath. As a shepherd, he knew what it meant to care and protect others, to lead them well, to nurture them and take care of them, doing what was best for them. So when it came to becoming king, David had all of these principles ingrained in his leadership, he knew exactly how to lead God's people because of his experience.

Everything he had learnt became applicable in serving God and building His kingdom. What have you learnt? Maybe it's through your job or your expertise or maybe just through life experience. You have something to offer others, whether it's in the technical side of things to do with law or administration or accounting or teaching, or maybe it's more relational and you have learnt so much about parenting or budgeting a household or marriage. Whatever experiences you've had, you have something to offer because your experience is valuable.

Before we talk about applying the gifts and talents that God has given you, it's really important that you realise that your gifts and talents are not as important as your relationship with God.

You need to know who God created you to be before knowing what God called you to do.

God created you for relationship, but He called you to servanthood. I think sometimes, it's too easy to fall into the trap of defining our relationship with God by what we do for Him, by how we serve Him. We equate relationship with busyness or even productivity. And it's easy to get it the wrong way round.

We think that in order to be closer to God, we need to produce more, be more busy, produce more fruit, because then God will accept me, then God will love me, then my relationship with God will be valid.

Rom 1:7 ⁷To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people

The way Paul addresses us is that we are loved by God, then we're called by God. We need to get the order right, we aren't loved because we fulfil the calling, we fulfil the calling because we're loved. It's His love that compels us, it's His love that motivates us, it's in that relationship that we're able to produce fruit.

John 15:5

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

Jesus talks about being the vine, about us remaining in Him and Him in us so that we will bear fruit, and then, just to clarify what it means to remain in Him, Jesus tells us in verse 9, remain in my love. In other words, we need to start with God's love for us, the basis of our entire relationship with Him, before we even think about bearing fruit.

When we get it the wrong way round, that's when all of our insecurities show up. That's when we start to question our own value.

We can't get security or safety from our calling or our purpose. The only way we battle our insecurities is to find security, and we don't find security in what God has called us to do, we find our security in who God has created us to be. We find security in knowing that God is our Father, that God loves us, that God is with us, that God accepts us, that God places value on our lives. And we know it's secure because God's love for us is unquestionable and unshakeable. It is secure.

God creates us for relationship, and then He calls us for a purpose.

Four Different Ways to Serve

1. Serve by helping.

Proverbs 3:27-28

²⁷ Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
when it is in your power to act.

²⁸ Do not say to your neighbour,
“Come back tomorrow and I’ll give it to you”—
when you already have it with you.

The scripture says, “when it is in your power to act” and “when you already have it with you.” In other words, there are times when we serve just because we can. It’s not forever or even long term, it’s just helping because we can, because we’re there, because we’re available. These have small time and effort commitments because it’s about doing the small and practical thing to help. This is more of a question of willingness than talent or skill. **Everyone can do something to help.**

Some easy ministries where it makes a difference:

Glory Bean

Hosting

Guest lounge

Corner bookstore

Verification

2. Serve with your skill

Going back to your skills, talents, and abilities, you have something that you can do better than average. And when you know what you’re good at, you can then apply it and use it to build the kingdom of God. That actually creates a sense of fulfilment because you know that you’re using what God gave you for the purpose He gave it to you. When you use your talent and ability, it serves others, it does good, it grows God’s kingdom.

Ex 35:30-35

³⁰ Then Moses said to the Israelites, “See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³¹ and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— ³² to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, ³³ to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts. ³⁴ And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. ³⁵ He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers.

This scripture specifically talks about the creativity that God has given people, the ability to not only create them, but the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge (creativity), to come up with all the designs.

These are the areas where you apply what you’re good at to make a noticeable impact. Of course, these require more time and effort and commitment because you’re putting your skills to work. As

with any skill or talent, they take time, they take energy, they take learning and practice, but they produce quality.

Not everyone can do everything, but everyone has something.

Ministries you can help out in:

Worship & PA

Creative Arts

Graphic Design

Videography

Church News

Events

3. Serve by fulfilling a need

Matt 9:35-37

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

In this scripture, we read that Jesus has compassion on the crowds because they had needs and nobody was fulfilling them. They were harassed, they were helpless, they had no shepherd. And Jesus says that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, meaning that Jesus needs people to help, there are so many people in need but there aren't enough people helping to fulfil those needs.

We can serve God and His kingdom by meeting and fulfilling the needs of others. What can you do to help fulfill a need? Because there are a lot of needs out there – needs can be practical, relational, logistical, administrative, physical, spiritual, emotional – the list is endless. So what need can you help fulfill?

In order to fulfil the needs of others, we can't just show, we need to grow. We can't just bring a talent or a skill, we need to be ready to change, to learn, to take additional levels of responsibility, and to really invest into the lives of others.

These kinds of ministries are more long term because people's needs are long term. They require more effort and you'd even work with and under leadership so that there's coordination and strategies in place.

Ministries that fulfill needs:

Connect Groups

Kids Church

Youth

SHARE

4. Serve by solving a problem

Deut 15:11

¹¹ There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.

Our world is full of problems. And you only need to look around to know that there are an endless list of problems affecting people within our families, our community, and even around the world. And in this scripture, God mentions just one of them. There are of course others, but just using this one problem, God says that there will always be poor people in the land. In other words, poverty is an issue and, it has always been an issue, and it will always be an issue. That seems like such a hopeless place to be. Yet, He gives a command to do something about it.

We can actually serve God by solving problems. This goes even beyond fulfilling a need because now, we're tackling something bigger than ourselves. Now, we're trying to find solutions to issues that impact people everywhere, things that are so big that we will most likely never fully solve them, but it doesn't mean that we should ignore them.

Gen 12:2, God is calling Abraham out of his land and He tells Abraham this:

"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

Now we know that ultimately, God's talking about Jesus coming through the line of Abraham, but there's still a principle that because God had blessed Abraham, Abraham would be a blessing to others. You are blessed to be a blessing. Where you go, you can make a difference, you can bring solutions, you can solve problems.

Or as Jesus puts it in Matt 5:14

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

You're the light. You have solutions. God has blessed you with talents, abilities, ideas, wisdom, creativity, innovations, skills, gifts, resources, and so much more so that you can be a blessing to others.

Being the real church means serving God and serving others. You can make a difference in the lives of those around you. Don't hide your talents, don't keep your gifts secret, use them, utilise them, and let's make a difference in the lives of those around us.